

Virginia Tech

Department of English

Policies/Procedures Information 2010

This packet collects policies and procedures that have developed over the years. See www.faculty.english.vt.edu for updates to this information + forms and additional information.

Please see promotion and tenure and peer review policies and procedures at www.faculty.english.vt.edu/pt/index.html

Department procedures aim to reflect the more comprehensive procedures in the *Faculty Handbook* (www.provost.vt.edu) as well as policies of the Controller's office (www.co.vt.edu/) and HR (www.hr.vt.edu). If there are conflicts, university policies and procedures always override departmental ones.

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Who does what in English

See the department directory at www.faculty.english.vt.edu for contact information.

Distribute office and building keys	Stephanie Snider
Reserve rooms for meetings	Stephanie Snider
Place events on the events calendar	Stephanie (please ask her to do this in addition to reserving the room); if you post frequently, ask Eve Trager to get you permission to post directly
Collect, collate, and post office hours each semester	Stephanie Snider
Place events on the college and university calendars	Sally Wieringa
Place news items in VT news (to distribute messages across campus)	Anyone: go to http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/submit_notice_form.php
Assign classes	Program directors (LLC, creative writing, professional writing, grad) in consultation with Cheryl and Carolyn
Assign classrooms / teaching schedules	Cheryl, who makes every effort to accommodate your needs & wishes but can't always do so
Take book orders	Dee Hezel
Collect course descriptions for distribution at the website	Undergraduate LLC course descriptions are to be sent to Ginney Fowler. Other undergraduate course descriptions go to Dee Hezel. Graduate course descriptions should be sent to Sally Wieringa.
Distribute course evaluation forms	Stephanie Snider
Force add students to classes (see more info linked from www.english.vt.edu)	Composition: Cheryl; 3764/3774: Sandra Ross; other undergrad classes: Faculty member signs form, student returns it to Dee; graduate: faculty + Sally
Help with student concerns	Nancy is our main "concerns" person. Please seek her help and keep her informed about issues.
Make technology functional	Eve Trager. Please use the request form at www.faculty.english.vt.edu/techsupport/index.html
Refill paper in floor printers	Any faculty or GTA, see Stephanie for paper
Replace empty cartridges in floor printers	Eve Trager or Judy Grady
Design print publications	Sally Wieringa

Manage purchases /reimbursements	Judy Grady
Modify the website	In transition
Print posters	Sandra Ross; please arrange first for reimbursement of poster costs (usually \$10/poster) + schedule
Set up / clean up meeting spaces	The groups that meet
Manage Carolyn's calendar	Sally Wieringa; alternate Stephanie Snider

Emergency Procedures

The department's emergency plan is available at www.faculty.english.vt.edu/docs/index.html

Please keep your **contact information** (phone, address, contact people) up to date both in the department and at HokieSpa.

Department **escape routes** are posted by the elevator doors. Also look for posted escape routes in buildings where you teach.

The **emergency poster** in the classrooms gives advice on six categories of emergencies (fire, bombs, threatening person, etc.). It would be a quick reference in an emergency. A copy of the poster is linked from www.faculty.english.vt.edu/docs/index.html, as is the university's "**emergency preparedness**" poster, which offers additional suggestions for responses.

Electronic message boards in the classrooms may provide "what to do" information.

In the case of evacuation, faculty should take **class lists with them in order to account for the members of the class**. Students should not scatter (unless they need to for safety, of course). In case of evacuation from Shanks, we go to Shultz to be accounted for and to wait for a "clear" message.

Teaching [see also "minimum expectations for faculty," p. 11]

Timely responses to requests: book orders, mid-term grades, course descriptions, final grades

Please respond to and respect the announced due dates for course descriptions, book orders, office hours and such. Our department is too large to accommodate late responses to requests.

Substitutes in emergencies, other absences

Anticipating the unexpected, please

- Identify a teaching partner whom you could call to substitute in case of emergency. Give a copy of your syllabus to your teaching partner and put that person in your Scholar or Blackboard site in case the person needs to distribute messages.
- Give a copy of your syllabi to Stephanie, and send her updates if you revise.
- If you will miss more than one class, please notify the department. Notify Diana George about composition classes, Nancy Metz about all other undergraduate classes, and Joe Eska about graduate classes. We need this information to answer questions that may come from students or their advisors.
- Please work with Nancy or Cheryl to identify a long-term substitute if you need one.

- If you will miss class for professional travel, please arrange in advance for class coverage.

Student concerns

In an emergency, call 911 or the police (1-6411). Nancy Metz is the department's primary resource for working with student concerns. Please keep Nancy informed about any situations that you believe merit further attention. You can also consult with the directors of composition, creative writing, graduate and undergraduate programs. The department is often the best place for connecting dots. Nancy can also connect you to university resources to help with concerns for student wellbeing, classroom behavior, and grade challenges or complaints. Please see the document, Identifying and Referring the Distressed Student, from Cook Counseling Center, linked from www.faculty.english.vt.edu/teaching/index.html.

Student appeals for "academic relief"

The university maintains an application and review procedure to assist students who believe that extenuating circumstances beyond their control (family emergency, physical or psychological illness, accident) warrant an exception to standard academic policy. Students initiate this review by submitting an Academic Relief request to Schiffert Health Center or Cook Counseling. The Academic Dean of the College works closely with this process. Knowing that a fair process is in place for all students can take the pressure off of faculty, who may not have any reasonable way of judging the various appeals made to them by distressed students.

Steps to Apply for Academic Relief (Cook Counseling):
www.ucc.vt.edu/academicrelief/ar_steps.htm

Guidelines for Academic Relief (Schiffert Health Center):
www.healthcenter.vt.edu/pdf/AcademicRelief.pdf

Force adds

No faculty member is obligated to force add students to classes. Sometimes it is generous to do so when students are nearing graduation and have made good faith efforts to get the courses they need (such as requesting them during course request). Please check enrollments in comparable classes before you agree to add; force adds can compromise our ability to offer a full range of classes as students avoid some sections. A significant number of adds (more than one or two) makes it look as though we should be teaching bigger classes. See a fuller description of force add policies at www.english.vt.edu.

Grade changes / incompletes

Basic principle: All students must have the same opportunities as others in the class.

Incompletes are for medical or other emergencies at the end of the semester when the student has completed almost all the work during the term. It is unfair and inappropriate to allow some students more time than others to complete the semester's work in the absence of such emergencies. Please see the previous section on academic relief if you feel pressed into making judgments about who warrants an incomplete.

Each change of grade requires sign-offs + data entry by Stephanie, Cheryl, Carolyn, and the dean. Grade changes cost time and department reputation. They should be rare and exceptional.

Classroom rearrangements

If you rearrange chairs and tables for your class, please place them back in their usual arrangement when class is over.

Classroom assignments

Cheryl does her best to schedule you in rooms that support your teaching style. Help her know your preferences by responding to her periodic surveys. Because of the shortage of classrooms at Virginia Tech, Cheryl cannot always get desirable rooms and schedules.

Locking Shanks classroom doors and printer closet doors

The CICs and Shanks seminar rooms are locked between classes and at the end of the day. Please lock and close the doors when you leave. If you are teaching in a seminar room, check out a key from Stephanie for the semester, and return it at the end of the semester. Also, please remember that printer closet doors should remain closed at all times.

Office hours

Faculty are required to provide "several regularly scheduled office hours each week for consultation with students." (*Faculty Handbook*, 4.7.1).

Student evaluations

All classes are evaluated every semester. Stephanie places the evaluation packets in faculty mailboxes. Please check before you go to class that you have enough forms, especially for the 16xx and other literature courses.

Distribute the evaluation forms in class, following the procedures on the sheet attached to the envelopes. Faculty leave the room during evaluations. A student returns completed evaluations to Shanks 323. If 323 is closed for the day, the student should be advised to slide the envelope under the door.

Technical Support/At Home Equipment/Listserv needs

Department technical support for office computers is available for employees of the department, including faculty, staff, and GTAs. We do not maintain home computers. If your VT-owned home computer begins to malfunction, please request technical support using the form and be prepared to bring the computer in to the department. Problems using your home connection to the internet should be routed through your internet service provider first.

Please request technical support using the form at www.faculty.english.vt.edu/techsupport/index.html

Faculty who use university equipment at their homes must complete an “at home” inventory form each year. You may download a form from www.faculty.english.vt.edu/docs.index.html

Listservs: Problem solving

If you think you are not receiving mail from, or are unable to send to, the department listserv,	contact Sally Wieringa or Eve Trager
If you want to create a listserv for your class,	use the functions integrated in to Scholar, where an up-to-date class list is automatically maintained.
If you want to send mail to the English majors or minors students	send your message to Dee
If you want to send an email only to students within a particular option	send your message to the option leader
If you want to create and maintain your own list for any other purpose	go to listserv.vt.edu/
If you would like to send a survey on the majors or minors listservs on behalf of a student	Have the student request IRB approval. Surveys or questionnaires that do not have IRB approval will not be posted. Then check with Dee.

Printing/Photocopying/Mailing/Faxing/Phones

The department supports teaching with printing and photocopying privileges, as well as with mailing, faxing, and phone calls related to teaching and faculty research. It also supports research for faculty with photocopying. We do not photocopy or support printing of materials for classes GTAs are taking.

Charges for personal phone calls or faxes will be billed each month.

In addition, the department provides toner and paper for the printers in the printing closets but not for desktop printers.

Printing for teaching: print **one copy** of a syllabus, exam, or short handout. Request photocopies in 323, using the request form. Please allow 24 hours for copy jobs. Distribute long items (articles, examples) to students electronically.

You may print and have photocopied black and white course flyers to encourage enrollment.

Student printing: If you prefer to read student papers in print, please have your students submit them to you in print rather than submitting them electronically for you to print.

Printing for research: print **one final copy** of a manuscript ready for mailing. Use your own resources if you wish to print drafts.

Mailing: Mail professional correspondence, such as letters of recommendation, external tenure reviews, and manuscripts by regular mail, not express or FedEx. Mail is picked up and delivered once a day, about 8 am.

Print jobs for multiple copies (programs, etc.). All printing jobs \$50 and over must be processed through Printing Services. A release for printing elsewhere must be obtained from Printing Services. Please check with Judy.

Posters. Sandra Ross manages the printing. If you will assign student posters, please request a course fee before classes begin to cover the paper-and-ink cost of \$10/poster. Faculty may not receive money directly from students. Also check with Sandra before the semester begins to be sure that time will be available for printing (c. 45 min/poster).

Using Public Spaces

Meeting Rooms

Reserving a meeting room

Contact Stephanie Snider to get the reservation on the room reservation calendar.

Also ask Stephanie to enter the event on the events calendar at <https://secure.hosting.vt.edu/www.calendar.vt.edu/main.php?calendar=englishcalendar> (or enter it yourself if you have calendar permission). If entering events is something you do regularly, please ask Eve Trager to set up calendar permission for you.

Send information on events for the CLAHS and university calendars (visiting speakers, programs) to Sally (sallyw@vt.edu).

Audio/video for room meetings

Enter a request for technical support or audio or video equipment in Shanks at www.faculty.english.vt.edu/techsupport/index.html at least a week in advance of the meeting. (This lead time is especially important for visiting speakers, for whom arrangements should be made before they arrive.)

Contact Paul Heilker (pheilker@vt.edu) with requests for audio support in Shanks.

If you need audio/video support for classrooms out of Shanks, please call Classroom A/V services (1-5684, www.classroomav.vt.edu).

If you need computer or projector support for the Computer Integrated Classrooms inside or outside of Shanks, please contact Rob Grant (1-2069 or robgrant@vt.edu)

Set up / clean up of meeting rooms and classrooms

These responsibilities fall to the group that uses the room. The job description of housekeepers does not include arranging furniture or cleaning up other than emptying trash in bins.

Please ask your group to return chairs/tables to their default positions (rows of chairs in 370, tables and chairs in seminar format in 380). Please also restore the default seminar style in 352.

Also ask participants to place their trash in bins.

Walls / doors

Please do not tape posters or announcements to stairwell doors or to walls in the halls. These are fire code violations.

Listservs

Department listservs are open (unmoderated) for department business. Please use content specific subject lines to help users manage their mail. Also see tips for problem solving in the section on technical support.

Display case near 323

Please bring copies of your recent publications to Stephanie for display.

Purchasing and Reimbursement

Basic concept: Every university action regarding money is governed by an official procedure and form. Please get approvals in advance and retain receipts.

Travel

Requests for travel must be approved before you travel. Faculty submit requests in early September to receive allotments for official travel. If funds remain, later requests may be accepted.

Locate forms at www.faculty.english.vt.edu/travel/index.html

1. **Request for travel funds:** an internal form used by the Advisory Committee in early September to develop the travel budget. This is not your official request to travel.
2. **Travel Estimate and Approval Form.** A university form that must be completed before you travel. On it you request exceptions to lodging rates. These must be approved in advance.
3. **Request for Travel Reimbursement.** A university form that must be completed within 30 days of your return. Your lodging receipt must show a zero balance. You must submit boarding passes as well as your airline ticket receipt.

Graduate students submit the request for travel funds to the [Director of Graduate Studies](#) for consideration by the Graduate Committee. Allow at least three weeks before you travel for the approval process. The Graduate Committee will seek evidence that you have applied for support from the [Graduate Student Assembly Travel Fund](#). Department funding is not automatic.

See reimbursement rates at <http://www.co.vt.edu/Procedures/p20335r.html> (also linked from www.faculty.english.vt.edu).

Unspent travel allotments go back into the department budget. The money is not transferrable for other purposes, such as purchase of equipment.

Food

Food for events

The state restricts the purchase of food with public funds to events where the entire university is invited. See the complete policy (20310a) here:
<http://www.co.vt.edu/Procedures/p20310a.pdf>

We can't buy food from our operating account (public funds) for most events other than spring commencement. Exceptions must be approved in advance, and lists of participant

names must be kept. When we use Foundation funds (donations) for such events, we are probably not using funds for the purposes for which they were donated.

Food events should be the exception, not routine. The department will reimburse only for food purchases that have been approved in advance of the event. The process parallels the process for travel approval and travel reimbursement. Please download the forms from the travel and food section of the faculty website.

If you will provide food for an event and will seek department reimbursement, you must get approval at least two weeks in advance, using the **form Food Approval** to request food purchases. You must submit original receipts (not credit card statements) with **form Food Reimbursement** within 30 days of the event. Please take advantage of the teakettle, coffee maker, microwave, and refrigerator in 380 to reduce costs for events.

Hosting visitors (including speakers, job candidates) at meals

The state restricts both the number of people for whom we can buy meals and the amount of the meals. It will pay for one visitor and one host for each meal. If you plan a larger group, please request permission in advance.

In 2010 in Blacksburg the limit for daily lodging is \$98, and for meals and entertainment \$46 (breakfast \$7, lunch \$11, dinner \$23, incidentals, including tips \$5). See more details of reimbursement rates linked from www.faculty.vt.edu/travel/index.html.

No alcohol can be purchased with state funds.

You must provide an itemized receipt that shows the specific meals ordered as well as the names of persons participating.

Compensation for extra work

In general, you cannot be paid more than 100% of time, but if you work on the composition textbook, assessment, and other such department tasks, especially beyond the 9-month academic year, you may be eligible for additional compensation. This compensation will be paid as travel support or as an addition to salary on a P14 form.

Minimum professional expectations for faculty and GTAs in English

Provide a syllabus for each course to the English Department when it is requested at the beginning of each semester. The syllabus should include “course objectives, topical outlines, expected performance on which grades will be assigned, as well as the instructor’s attendance policy, if any” (*Faculty Handbook* 4.6.1). The syllabus should also contain a detailed schedule of readings and assignments.

Honor regular office hours.

Teach the course as it has been approved by the curriculum committees. Consult the course bullets at www.faculty.english.vt.edu for information about any requirements related to texts or number of papers, or check with a program director.

Return graded work in time for students to profit from commentary on the next assignment.

Maintain a professional relationship with students.

Use class time well. Peer reviews should be scheduled on the syllabus with some structure and with participation required. It is reasonable to expect students to accomplish most of their work on group projects outside of class.

Provide a substitute if you will need to miss class for illness or professional travel. Identify a teaching partner who has an alternate schedule from yours as well as knowledge about the course you teach.

Turn in grades, including tentative grades, on time. (The failure to post grades on time may have serious consequences for the students involved, including the loss of earned honors.)

Let the department know when you need assistance. Everyone does, from time to time.

Share concerns about students with the department. Even if you think you can handle the situation by yourself or if you have contacted the Dean of Students directly, please notify Nancy Metz so that English can provide a perspective and "connect the dots" at the department level.

Participate in department governance. Faculty at all levels should attend regularly scheduled department meetings and assume leadership responsibilities as appropriate to rank.